

**SECRET**

BOOK DISPATCH NO. 616

TO: CERTAIN STATIONS AND BASES

FROM: Chief, SR

25 APR 1958

SUBJECT: General: REDCAP/REDSKIN/LCIMPROVE

Specific: RED-4: USSR State Committee for  
Cultural Relations with Foreign  
Countries and Associated Organs

ACTION REQUIRED: For discussion and passage to liaison as appropriate

1. In response to requests from various Field Stations for information on the newly formed USSR State Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, Headquarters is forwarding a report containing all information available as of 25 March 1958 on that Committee and on associated organs which will be instrumental in implementing the stepped-up cultural program of the Soviets. This program will in turn result in increased contact between Soviet officials and Westerners, presenting KUBARK with opportunities for operational exploitation under the REDCAP, REDSKIN and possibly the LCIMPROVE program.

2. Attention is called to paragraph 10 of the attached report. The interpretation given therein was prepared by KUDSK's International Communism Division.

3. The attached report may be discussed with and passed to liaison services as deemed appropriate by addressee stations.

Attachments:

- 1 Report
- 1 Hqs & Field Distribution List
- 1 Liaison Distribution List

SR/RED/BEK/BO'C:djb/21 April 1958

Co-ordinated in Draft by:

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Attachment to Book Dispatch No. 616

USSR State Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries  
and Associated Organs

28 March 1958

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USSR State Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries  
and Associated Organs

28 March 1958

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USSR State Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries  
and Associated Organs

STATE COMMITTEE FOR CULTURAL RELATIONS WITH FOREIGN COUNTRIES:

1. As a result of the dissatisfaction with propaganda activities which the Soviet press had expressed so profusely during 1956-1957, the authority of the Ministry of Culture of the USSR has been greatly reduced and various of its functions have been taken over by other Soviet organizations. Its lecture propaganda functions were transferred to the All-Union Society for the Dissemination of Political and Scientific Knowledge, headed by M. B. MITIN, the last Editor of the Cominform journal. The need to coordinate and organize more effectively cultural exchange activities is undoubtedly one reason behind the formation, announced 21 May 1957, of the State Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, under the Council of Ministers, and is a reflection of the increasing importance which top Soviet officials attach to the cultural exchange program.

2. The objective of the State Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries as stated by its Chairman, Yuriy A. ZHUKOV (aka Georgiy A. ZHUKOV), former Foreign Editor of Pravda, is "to tear down the Iron Curtain erected by some Western nations against Soviet cultural groups." ZHUKOV compared the functions of his committee in the field of cultural exchanges with those of the British Council. A compilation of available information reveals the functions of the Committee to be as follows:

a. The Committee will work on a governmental level as opposed to working with individuals and with non-official groups;

b. The Committee will make arrangements for and coordinate the visits of official (cultural) delegations to the USSR, thus having the authority to approve and disapprove exchange programs proposed by other agencies, and may assume the function of initiating some of the programs to be "sponsored" in name by other agencies;

c. The Committee will coordinate activities of Soviet organizations with corresponding organizations abroad and promote inter-governmental agreements for cultural and scientific cooperation;

d. The Committee will hold press conferences with important second-level Soviet officials regularly and will assist foreign correspondents in Moscow to obtain objective information about the USSR, and it will augment rather than take the place of the functions of the Press Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, USSR, in providing domestic information. The Committee will handle all requests by correspondents for interviews and press conferences with Soviet officials and other Soviet citizens (not involving foreign relations), for visits to factories, universities, etc., and will make the necessary arrangements. The trips, however, will have to be cleared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

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e. It is assumed that the Committee will supervise (at least behind the scenes) the newly-created Union of Soviet Societies of Friendship and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (see below).

3. Members of the State Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries have been present at negotiations for cultural agreements with the Chinese Peoples Republic, Japan, Czechoslovakia, The Korean Democratic Republic, Yugoslavia, France, and Ceylon. It is presumed that the following were among the subjects dealt with: fields of literature, arts, sciences, education, health, radio-broadcasting, films, sports, and tourism.

4. ZHUKOV, the Chairman of the State Committee, also went to Greece as the leader of the delegation for the Committee for Peace and Reduction of International Tension.

5. SOVINFORMBURO, which in 1955 was listed as being under the Ministry of Culture, is now, according to a comment made by a Soviet diplomat, a part of the State Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries. (There is enclosed, as Annex A to this report, an excerpt from a newspaper article concerning the SOVINFORMBURO in Stockholm, forwarded at this time as a matter of interest to those areas in which SOVINFORMBURO is represented.)

UNION OF SOVIET SOCIETIES OF FRIENDSHIP AND CULTURAL RELATIONS WITH FOREIGN COUNTRIES:

6. Since October 1957 there have been established in Moscow for the first time Soviet friendship societies with eleven foreign countries. By the end of February 1958 these included the Chinese Peoples Republic, Czechoslovakia, Finland, France (claimed by Pravda), Germany, Great Britain (inauguration 14 February 1958), Hungary, India, Italy and Poland. On 7 March 1958 a Soviet-Bulgarian Friendship Society was announced. Other countries will undoubtedly be added to the list rapidly.

7. The formation of individual friendship societies is the first step in a re-vamping of the Soviet Union's apparatus for semi-official cultural contacts abroad. In early February a special session of the Board of VOKS (All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries) agreed to unite the individual societies by establishing an "alliance" of the societies. At a national conference of the societies on 17-18 February 1958 a resolution was passed establishing the Union of Soviet Societies of Friendship and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries. Nina V. POPOVA, head of VOKS, was elected chairman of the new Union. One ZHUKOV (presumed to be Yuriy A. ZHUKOV) is the head of its governing committee. The Union was allegedly established for the purpose of "permanent cooperation, exchange of experience, and coordination of activity", and the building of a more firm friendship.

8. The next step in this calculated pattern concerned VOKS itself. On 27 February 1958 it was announced that VOKS, which had been in existence for 32 years, had been abolished and that the new Union would promote cultural cooperation with

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peoples of foreign countries. It was further announced that Culture and Life, formerly published under VOKS, would be the organ of the new cultural alliance. It is evident that the "dissolution" of VOKS has no real meaning other than a change of title, since VOKS has turned over to the new Union "its premises, inventory, and other assets" including its publication, its chief, and undoubtedly other VOKS personnel to staff the new Union and play key roles within the individual societies.

9. POPOVA has set forth some of the goals of the new Union. It will widen contacts abroad. It will arrange an extensive program for the exchange of delegations. It plans to increase the dissemination abroad of information about the Soviet people and will arrange to inform the Soviet people about people and events in other countries. The Union will open a "House of Friendship" in Moscow where foreign guests will be received and give lectures and where Soviets returning from abroad will report on their trips and make observations about foreign countries.

10. One interpretation of POPOVA's remarks and of the new Union indicates that the individual friendship societies and the new Union are probably also designed to:

- a. Provide a fresh and more flexible apparatus for contacts with foreign countries;
- b. Encourage public opinion abroad concerning the Soviet Union's friendship, peaceful intentions, achievements, and maturity as a great nation;
- c. Reach and influence persons heretofore uninterested in the work of a friendship society with the USSR existing in their own country;
- d. Facilitate and encourage selected travel into and out of the USSR;
- e. Exploit to a greater extent the foreign diplomatic colony in Moscow for Soviet propaganda purposes;
- f. Enable counterpart societies in Free World countries to move away from the links that tie them to the local CPs (and which thereby made them vulnerable to enemy propaganda) by the establishment of a bilateral relationship which could make frequent association with the local CP unnecessary;
- g. Provide the Soviet State Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries with a more useful adjunct in the field of unofficial contacts.

11. In line with a general increase noted in direct Soviet contacts abroad, both party and government, it is expected that the new societies and the Union will also provide another vehicle to be utilized as RIS cover and as cover for CPSU specialists giving guidance to foreign Communist Parties. This expectation has been somewhat confirmed by the appointments of known RIS officers such as Sergey Leonidovich TIKHVINSKIY as head of the Department for China under the State Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, and Aleksandr Semenovitch PANYUSHKIN,

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former Soviet Ambassador to China, as member of the Board of the Soviet-Chinese Friendship Society.

12. It is anticipated, with the establishment of these friendship societies within the USSR, that closer cooperation can thereby be maintained with the societies of friendship-with-the-USSR which have existed in many countries for a number of years. For the most part, these indigenous societies are entitled so that the name of the foreign country appears first (i.e., Netherlands-USSR Society; Swedish-Soviet Society, etc.) whereas the societies set up in the USSR are in reverse (i.e., Soviet-Bulgarian Friendship Society). Caution should be taken to use the names carefully in order to avoid confusion. For comparative purposes, there is enclosed, as Annex B, an excerpt from the Swedish magazine Se concerning the Swedish-Soviet Friendship Society.

Annex: A - Information on SOVINFORMBURO, Stockholm  
B - Information on Swedish-Soviet Friendship Society

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Annex A

SOVINFORMBURO:

The following excerpts were taken from an article entitled "Frayed Nerves Behind the Facade" which appeared in Se magazine (Sweden) on 27 December 1957. The article was written by Lennart Savemark who was employed in the Stockholm office of TASS and in the Soviet Embassy press section from 1944 to 1951 and in the SOVINFORMBURO until 1957.

"Up to now the youngest in the group of Russian enterprises in our country is the Soviet Union's news bureau #2 -- The Soviet Union's Information Bureau (SIB), which since the late summer of 1956 has been located in a house at Götavägen 4, Lidingö (Stockholm).

"An effort is made to preserve a certain anonymity by posting no firm name or sign on the door and by remaining unlisted in the telephone directory. The outwardly visible difference between SIB and TASS is that the Information Bureau is to distribute news from the Soviet Union to the Swedish press. TASS works in the other direction and sends Swedish news to the Soviet press.

"The work is officially headed by Editor-in-Chief Aleksey ALEKSANDROV. On his arrival at Stockholm he had five years of experience with the SIB branch in Helsinki. He is said to have been a journalist on the staff of Pravda before that. The deputy chief, Nikolay FOMIN, is also said to be a former Pravda staffer.

"The information bureau produces a daily stenciled propaganda bulletin, 'The Soviet Union Today'. It is sent out to the entire Swedish daily press.

"In addition, there is a feature and picture service. The Communist press enjoys certain extra benefits. All material is delivered free of charge. In practice the whole job is performed by two Moscow-trained Swedish Communists and two women stenographers.

"Technical equipment consists of a teletype machine of an early model linked to a radio receiver, a type recorder, a few typewriters and a duplicating machine.

"ALEKSANDROV also directly translates, prints and distributes Soviet propaganda brochures with friendly assistance from the Communist publishing house 'Arbetarkultur'. ALEKSANDROV and FOMIN are among the Soviet Russians who now and then personally visit Swedish CP headquarters at Kungsgatan 84. The number of such Russian visitors is very small because of the risk of compromise. ALEKSANDROV also is active in Soviet contact work with the Swedish sports movement.

"Immediate superior at home is the SIB's Scandinavian chief in Moscow, Yevgeniy GUSEV.

"In a semi-modern 6-room apartment, three flights up at Birger Jarlsgaten 110

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is the Soviet Embassy's press section. The personnel consists of three Swedish citizens. Editors Sven Niklas Storck and Sören Rydstrom are CP members. Their performance is sometimes impressive, particularly if one considers the technical resources available to them. Storck is also the responsible publisher and editor-in-chief of the Embassy's own Swedish-language mouthpiece, the propaganda newspaper 'News from the Soviet Union', with a weekly edition of 20,000. Rydstrom is first deputy.

"The publication is presented as the organ of the Swedish-Russian society whose name is 'The Society for the Promotion of Cultural and Economic Relations between Sweden and the Soviet Union.' But the Embassy leadership at Villagatan 17 determines the newspaper's contents. The editor gets his directives through Third Secretary Leonid SLABOV, the security deputy. Lately ALEKSANDROV appears to be having a good bit to say about it."

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Annex B

SWEDISH-SOVIET FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY:

The following excerpts were taken from an article entitled "Frayed Nerves Behind the Facade" which appeared in Se magazine (Sweden) on 27 December 1957. The article was written by Lennart Savemark.

"The Swedish-Soviet Society suffered a catastrophic decline in activity because of the revolt in Hungary in the fall of 1956. Many of the sympathizers left the Society at that time.

"Lately, however, some of the lost ground has been recovered, for example, in the form of the reconstituted so-called delegation exchange. The Swedish-Soviet Society runs some 30 local 'Societies for the Promotion of Cultural and Economical Relations between Sweden and the Soviet Union'. These groups are spread over the whole country from Malmö in the south to Kiruna in the North.

"Room No. 1, which contains the Society's propaganda library and record collection with both Russian classical works and Red fighting songs in its repertory, functions as a reading and meeting room for Russian language circles. In Room No. 2 is the Society's organization secretary, Bertil Karlsson from the Stockholm Communist worker commune. The Society 'Secretariat' is responsible to the organization's board of directors, according to the bylaws. This board still contains a few prominent Swedish personalities. (Acting Chairman is Erland von Hofsten, a department head in the Royal Ministry of Social Affairs.)

"But the most important factor in this connection is the 'Soviet Government's Committee for Cultural Relations Abroad', of which G. A. ZHUKOV is chief. Go-between is VOKS with KURENTSOV as chief of Scandinavian operations and Second Secretary Aleksey RYLNikov as Cultural Attache.

"RYLNikov's tasks also include the Society's economic affairs. The Swedish-Soviet Society would not be able to exist very many days if it depended on members' dues and tickets to meetings alone.

"The organization's promotional work in the field is coordinated with Communist Party activity. This is reflected for example in the strong Communist domination of both the Society's leadership in Stockholm and its boards in the hinterland, as well as in propaganda and meeting techniques.

"Spheres of activity are: provision of contacts between Soviet and Swedish institutions, organizations and individuals, Soviet propaganda at lectures and film meetings, exhibitions, etc.; distribution of propaganda brochures; Russian language circles; tourist trips and exchange of delegations."

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